

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL: A STUDY OF EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

In an era where technology prevails, entrepreneurs also as marketers see the necessity to stay up with the fast pace of change or risk being outdated. Gone are the day's, when a pure-bricks business model will thrive well in current market scenario. It is practically impossible to style a marketing strategy without considering social networks. Social media had become really important gradient in today's marketing mix generally and in promotion mix especially. Adapting some sort of marketing online through social media may be a key node for all businesses, especially in an industry where trends constantly change like fashion and handicrafts. The paper carries out inquiry to know the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool and an attempt has been made to research the extent social media helps consumers in buying decision making.

KEYWORDS: Promotional tool, marketing strategy, Online Marketing, Digital Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 40 years, we've experienced a radical shift in how business is conducted and the way people interact. The introduction of private computers, the web, and e-commerce have had an incredible impact on how businesses operate and market. The introduction of social media technology is accelerating and that we can expect it to possess an identical impact on businesses now and into the longer term. As new technologies became accessible, businesses that learn to use new technologies gain great benefits. Some of the best-known examples include technology-driven companies like Microsoft, eBay, Amazon and Google. In a short span of your time, social media has become one among the foremost loved mediums for the Indian youths today. Social Media Marketing is that the hottest new marketing concept and each business owner want to understand how social media can generate value for his or her business. People are social naturally and collect or share information that's important to them. Social Media Marketing is about understanding how technology is making it easier for people to attach socially with their social networks and the way your business can profit from that understanding. More and more of your customers, whether for private use, business-to-consumer or business-to-business reasons use social media in every aspect of their lifestyle. There is a standard misconception that social media and social networking sites (SNS) are two synonymous terms.

It is a social instrument of two way communication facilitating the sharing of information between users within a defined network via web 2.0 (O'Reilly, (2005, April 6)). It involves online activities in which the user contributes to content creation.

Scope of the Study

Scope of the study has been limited to digital media marketing. The study has been confined to eastern region of Uttar Pradesh as this area has greater internet penetration and plenty of social media sites users.

Objective of Study

- To examine the extent, social media that helps consumers in buying decision making
- To study the gap between consumer expectation from Social media and its performance
- To suggest strategies to bridge the gap between expectation and performance to improve its effectiveness

Research Methodology

Research paper is based on descriptive research design and questionnaire has been designed, to know the point of view of respondent regarding the extent of social media that helps consumers in buying decision making. The survey was conducted online Google form and responses of 150 social networkers were collected. The questionnaire was put over Google Form and the link was sent to users to fill the instrument through various social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn etc. The respondents and other people on different social networking sites were also requested to post the link from their profile. For visual representation of finding and results bar charts, pie charts and tables etc. has been used.

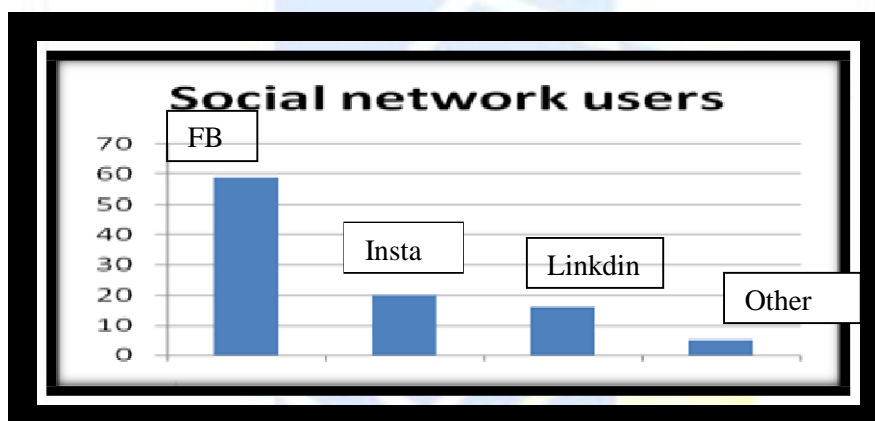
Table 1.1 Profile of respondent

Variable*	Classification	Total N (%)
Gender	Male	71
	Female	79
Age	Less than 18	0
	18-24	68
	25-39	72
	40-60	10

*at 95% the two variables are significantly different

Analysis

Fig 1.1 Facebook top the chart



Facebook is the most popular social networking site for the respondents. Instagram and twitter have got the second and third positions respectively.

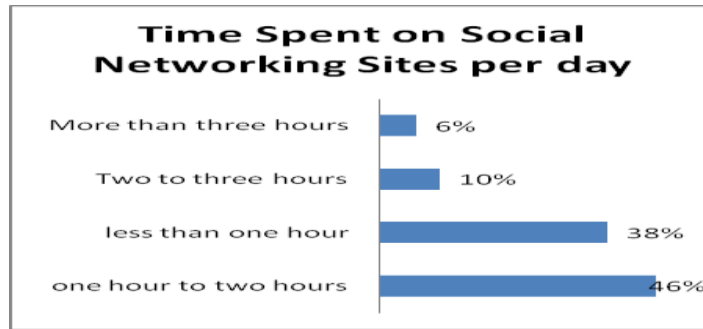
Table 1.2: Motivation behind following a brand or joining a brand page

Variable	Total N	
Motivation to follow a Brand or Join a Brand page	Brand invitation/Advertising	68
	Friend's invitation	52
	Personal research	32
	y towards the brand	44

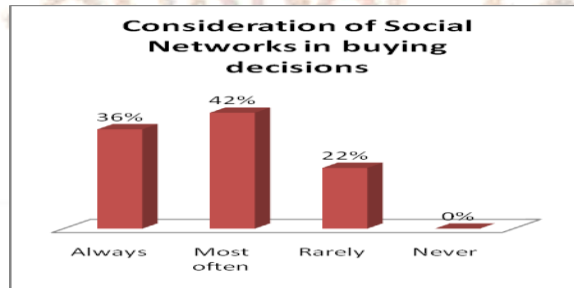
The main reason fans come to hitch a brand page or brand following is thru brand invitation/ advertising followed by a lover invitation. The search factor (personal Research) plays a crucial role, thus it's crucial for brands to be found if consumers look for them. Brand loyalty also plays a task in motivation towards brand following on the social networking platforms.

Social networking sites are a replacement CRM (to receive exclusive deals and offers, exclusive content) tool where the buyer wants to feel exclusive. The attachment to brand may be a key motivator to advocate the brands. Demonstrating appreciation for the brand, showing what you wish, and supporting the Brand's values play a lively role in generating advocacy. The desire to interact with the brand either through dialog with the brand's representatives or with other consumers reaches a stimulating level.

Fig 1.2 Time dedicated for socializing

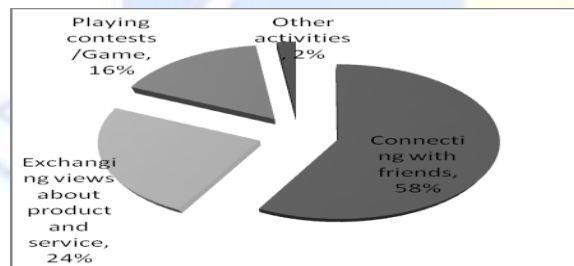


Social networking is now an important aspect of the day. With most of the people spending quite



hour online! The above chart depicts very clearly that what proportion it is vital for the marketers to require advantage of things by making workable marketing strategies.

Fig 1.3 Purpose for using social media platform



Social media, helped people connect with long lost friends. This is often evident with 58% respondent within the survey using such platform to connect with friends. While 24% respondents believe exchanging their views and experiences on various products/Services et al. aside from just playing games and participating in contests (16%). So, here marketers have much opportunity to talk with their targets and offer them their products/service to influence them to Transact and become loyal customer for them. It's a fast growing platform for brands altogether the sectors. It acts as an efficient tool because it is that the best thanks to reach out market segment without incurring huge cost.

Fig 1.4 considering social media in buying decision

It is evident from the above bar chart that the bulk of the respondents are using social media networks are considering social media before starting of buying deciding process. quite two third of users are always considering social media networks at the time of getting into purchase decision. So, it's of enormous importance for the marketers to put information on the social sites where there's huge probability to return into the eyes of consumers and if successes into pursuing the customers' then positive word of mouths will automatically start. This may eventually give rise to multiple impacts and conversation will start on the web.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-18.312	.000			
	To get Information About Product Service	.622	.000	.979	.334.	.739.
	To Find Friends Review	1.474	.000	2.629	-2.030.	.044.
	To Get Exclusive Offers	.679	.000	1.308	1.416	159.
	To Interact With Brand	-1.097	.000	-2.338	-2.030 .	.044

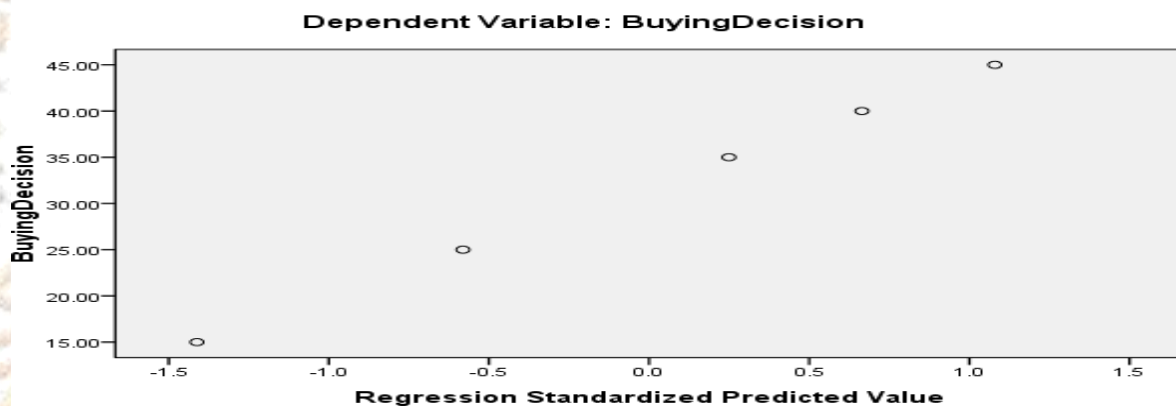
a. Dependent Variable: Buying Decision

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	15.0000	45.0000	32.0000	12.04159	5
Residual	.00000	.00000	.00000	.00000	5
Std. Predicted Value	-1.412	1.080	.000	1.000	5
Std. Residual	0

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Decision

Scatterplot



Regression Analysis was performed where in Buying Decision - the motivation factor why individuals joined brand page or followed a brand was taken a variable and thus the suggestions that specify why individuals follow a brand on social networking sites were taken as independent variables.

In a regression curve , $y = a + bx$, b represents the slope of the regression of y on x , y represents the experimental variable and x is that the variable . Only two factors are showing a positive slope. It shows that the experimental variable “To get information about product/Service”

Shows 0.62 variations on the variable “Buying Decision “. Hence it indicates the more the companies should instigate individuals to talk about their brands/ products the more the possibilities that consumer will get persuaded towards the products/brands and can make purchase decision accordingly.

Findings

There is almost no variability among the social media network users on the basis of gender. It has been found that younger people are adopting social media like anything and with a pace that was never before in the past. It has also been found that almost every social media users who were respondent in this case use to go to brand pages to learn more about the product/services, to learn about the exclusive offers, to find the reaction of their friends and peer on the selected brands. The effectively of social media as a marketing tool will only be possible when organization having their presence on social media provide the concrete and

timely information needed by the consumers. The main way fans come to join/ follow a brand page/ brand on social networking sites is through advertising followed by a friend invitation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, business today is being transformed from a transactional relationship to a social relationship. It's now more critical than ever that successful businesses use Engagement Marketing principles to plan for successfully engaging their prospects and customers before, during and after their purchase cycle, which the thought for this engagement is high-quality and relevant information. Information which are demanded by target market at a time and place of their choice (24/7 and 365 days/year). Marketer's job is to provide this information in such a fashion that you simply are viewed during a positive light, create a positive brand and merchandise reputation, and are selected as their brand of choice. With this growth and scale of social networking, we'd even be able to buy products and services through the social medium. The medium is growing in no time and holds huge potential but remains in its nascent stage in India. Therefore, it is time for the companies to make effective strategies and execute them to win larger share of business through this revolutionary medium and become the innovative firm of coming future.

Recommendations

Social media channels have a stimulating ability to attract customers with very brief statements, which they will lead your prospects and customers to valuable content located on your website. On the other hand, your website can encourage visitors to interact alongside your company by prominently linking to your social media channels. So as to accomplish this goal the subsequent steps could also be followed,

1. Modify your website to enrich your Social Media Strategy.
2. Identify the Actions you would like your Customers and Prospects to require
3. Implement your Conversations
4. Provide the Content your Visitors Want.
5. Maintain a uniform Communication Style
6. Send Advertisements.
7. Use your Web Properties to drive people to require the actions you're targeting

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